recruitment for certain period. The backlog in these banks can be cleared after they are permitted to make fresh recruitment. Some of the banks are however participating in special Recruitment drive for SCs and STs which is ending on 31.3.1997.

**Manufacture of Cigarettes**

503. SHRI SOMJIBHAI DAMOR : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have granted approval to manufacture cigarettes by Phillip Morris Overseas Investment Corportion, USA and other Multinational companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government are aware of reports appeared in Business World dated 16-29th October, 1996, regarding manufacturing and launching of Marlboro cigarettes in the domestic market by multi-national companies and its effectes;

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(e) whether manufacturing of cigarettes has been brought outside the purview of licensing even under foreign collaboration; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b). No foreign collaboration approval has been granted to M/s. Phillip Morris Overseas Investment Corporation, USA for the manufacture of cigarettes. During the last four years only M/s. R.J. Reynolds Tobacco International SA, Switzerland have been granted approval for setting up a joint venture in India with 50% foreign equity participation for the manufacture of Cigarettes.

(c) and (d). Yes, Sir. No proposal has, however, been received so far for the manufacture and launching of Marlboro cigarettes from any foreign company.

(e) No, Sir. Manufacture of cigarettes attracts compulsory licensing under the industries (Development & Regulation) Act, 1951.

(f) Does not arise.

**Gross Domestic Products**

504. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the estimates of gross domestic product (GDP) during 1995-96 , which were announced during July 1996, are likely to be revised downwards; and

(b) if so, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). The advance estimates for the gross domestic product (GDP) announced by the Central Statistical Organisation in July 1996 have been revised incorporating latest estimates of agricultural production and industrial production. The GDP for the year 1995-96 at factor cost at constant (1980-81) prices is now estimated at Rs. 2,67,461 crore (as against Rs. 2,68,671 crore estimated earlier. This adjustment has been necessitated due to lower growth estimate of GDP at factor cost at constant prices for agriculture, forestry and fishing sector. This is now placed at 0.9 per cent compared with 2.4 per cent estimated earlier.

**Import Duty on Rubber and Edible Oil**

505. SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a heavy demand to withdraw the reduction of import duty on natural rubber and edible oils; and

(b) If so, the response of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Government has examined the representations seeking restoration of pre-budget rates of import duty on natural rubber and edible oils. It has not been found possible to accede to such request.

**Amendment in Patent Law**

506. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :
SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news appearing in the Indian Express dated August 10, 1996 captioned "India to face retaliation if Patent Laws do not toe global lines";

(b) whether the Government propose to amend the Patent Law in Line with the international laws;

(c) if so, the details of the proposed amendments; and

(d) by when a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (d). The World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement, inter-alia, contains an agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) in respect of provisions concerning Intellectual Property Rights. Apart from the obligations which arose from January 1, 1995, India has time till January 1, 2000 to implement its obligations under the TRIPs Agreement and till January 1, 2005 to introduce product patents in the areas of technology not protected so far. For this purpose we have embarked on wider consultations.